

TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

OVERSIGHT HEARING

**Fiscal Year 2004 and Fiscal Year 2005 Spending and Performance**



Testimony of Daniel Tangherlini  
Director  
**District Department of Transportation**

Anthony A. Williams  
Mayor

Committee on Public Works and the Environment  
Carol Schwartz, Chairperson

**Wednesday, March 2, 2005**  
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**Council Chambers**  
**Washington, DC**

Good day, Chairperson Schwartz, Councilmembers and staff. I am Dan Tangherlini, Director of the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and I am pleased to present DDOT's testimony for this Oversight Hearing on Fiscal Year 2004 Spending and Program Implementation.

It is with pride that I share a summary of the progress DDOT continues to make to maintain and improve the District's transportation system while increasing safety for its users. Today I will highlight our accomplishments and note our challenges as we move forward in our commitment to meeting and exceeding the needs of the District and its residents. In our effort to meet these needs, DDOT will focus on serving the people who live in our city. We strive to achieve longevity for safe and aesthetically pleasing infrastructure that is customer-focused.

I would like to publicly express my gratitude to the entire DDOT team. The commitment and dedication that is shown by our public servants is simply outstanding, and we would not have come this far without them. I also want to take this opportunity to thank you, Chairperson Schwartz and members of the Council for your support and actions to help DDOT fulfill its mission.

As you know, DDOT's assets include the 1,100 miles of roads; more than 200 bridges; the District's 114,000 city trees; 66,000 streetlights; 1,600 traffic signals; 1,500 parking meters; 150,000 streets signs as well as bicycle and pedestrian activities, traffic and transportation safety, regulation of our public space and the District's relations with WMATA.

Over the past year, DDOT has initiated the full implementation of its Asset Management program. In short, this program enables us to know exactly what is needed to ensure the viability of all of DDOT's assets. This is accomplished by having a complete inventory, condition assessment, life cycle analysis and cost benefit analysis. This assessment will better enable DDOT to prioritize its projects according to need and available resources. To date, inventories have been completed in the following areas: streets, alleys, bridges, and tunnels. Such a comprehensive management program will enable us to know exactly what resources we need for which areas so that

DDOT can continue to improve upon its recent success and ensure a sustained program.

I will now present my testimony in three parts: Basic Operations and Maintenance, Safety and Major Accomplishments.

### **Basic Operations and Maintenance**

DDOT's greatest responsibility is the basic upkeep of our transportation system: building and maintaining our roads, bridges, trees, sidewalks, street and traffic lights and encouraging mass transit.

#### **Streets and Roads**

Since the beginning of 2004, DDOT has paved 74 miles of streets and roads. **(41.26 miles in '04/ 32.5 ytd '05)** Seventy nine percent (79%) of the District's 1,100 miles of streets now have an excellent/good rating. In the coming fiscal years, DDOT will focus on increasing this percentage. Additionally, in 2004, DDOT filled 185,767 potholes.

Some of this success has come about through private asset management contracting for the upkeep of our National Highway System. We have learned a great deal from this 5-year contract and as I mentioned earlier, we are moving toward this method of programming for the upkeep and maintenance of our entire network. DDOT will continue to improve upon current asset management operations on the National Highway System this year and will expand these operations in coming years.

Notable 2004 repaving projects include the completed reconstruction of New Hampshire Avenue, NW from Eastern Avenue to Oglethorpe Street, and the segment of Bladensburg Road from Mount Olivet to New York Avenue.

#### **Sidewalks**

In an effort to increase safety and walkability throughout District neighborhoods, DDOT continues to focus efforts on building new sidewalks and repairing existing ones. I would like to thank Councilmembers Schwartz and Fenty for their help in the elimination

of the fee for sidewalk construction. The removal of this fee has enabled DDOT to be proactive in the construction of sidewalks.

In 2004, 2,900 sidewalk repairs were completed. Additionally, 25 miles of sidewalk were constructed. Committed to increasing the number of ADA ramps citywide, close to 150 were constructed by DDOT in 2004; this represents a 100% increase from 2003.

In some areas of the city, we were surprised to find resistance to the construction of sidewalks. However, with a focus on safety for all who live in the District, and to encourage pedestrian mobility, DDOT will continue to increase the number of sidewalks in our city.

Challenges are often faced when repairing sidewalks in historic areas. To address this issue, this spring, DDOT will begin to develop a policy to address sidewalks in such neighborhoods. Alternative materials such as pavers will be studied so that our sidewalks are safe, aesthetically pleasing and long lasting.

### **Alleys**

In 2004, under an asset management contract, DDOT inventoried, assessed conditions and created the first city-wide Alley Information Database. This work brought to light the special challenge DDOT faces with alleys. Of the 364 miles of alleys, over twenty five percent (25%) received a poor rating; another forty five percent (45%) received a fair rating. Over twenty percent (20%) of alleys are unimproved, meaning they are simply comprised of gravel, grass or dirt. Due to financial constraints, DDOT was able to pave just over 4 miles of alleys in 2004. A backlog of alley work still exists. However, in 2005, DDOT has a record level of funding for alley repair and rehabilitation with \$5 million programmed. Additionally, funds are available for historic alleys.

That said, I do feel as though DDOT is turning a corner in regards to alleys. With the first city-wide Alley Information Database now in use, DDOT has the information necessary to help us prioritize what work we are financially capable of performing so that the alleys in the worst condition will receive attention first. With all the constraints for (re)construction of alleys, I am proud of the maintenance work that we were able to provide on 227 alleys city-wide.

Additionally, last fall, DDOT completed an alley policy for historic areas that will enable us to better address issues with the resources we have. The policy balances the importance of historic areas, as well as the expense of and long-term safety issues related to repairing in kind.

## **Bridges**

The District's 213 bridges are vital parts of the transportation system, affecting public safety, regional access and mobility, infrastructure stewardship and homeland security. I consider the health of our bridges as DDOT's highest capital improvement priority, and we work very hard every day to keep our bridges in good repair within our Agency's financial constraints.

After having to close the 9<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge in May of last year due to safety reasons, as I am sure you recall from the hearing last year, contractors worked 12-hour shifts, including the weekends, to have the bridge reopened within 3 weeks. This vital bridge carries 20,000 vehicles on a daily basis. Since then, work has commenced to replace this bridge with a new parallel span and reconstruct Brentwood Road.

I am pleased to report that in June, Mayor Anthony A. Williams and US Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta signed a Memorandum of Understanding pledging the cooperation and support of USDOT to facilitate the construction by the District of a new South Capitol Street/Frederick Douglass Bridge as a project of national and regional significance for this gateway to the nation's capital. The rebuilding of this bridge is a key part of the multi-jurisdictional, multi-agency commitment to the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI).

Other completed bridge construction projects include the rehabilitation of 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Wheeler Road Bridges, SE over Oxon Run.

## **Streetlights**

Challenges with streetlights are often experienced due to the effects of obsolete infrastructure, old age and inferior installation.

To address the problem of the obsolete series circuits that were installed in the 1920's, DDOT initiated series circuit projects in Mount Pleasant, Woodley Park, 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Mt. Olivet Road and C Street, to name a few. Each neighborhood has seen a marked improvement in the quality of lighting and customer feedback has been positive.

To address old age and inferior installation of streetlight infrastructure, DDOT, with a task force of citizens, historic groups and other government agencies, completed a study that provides the District with well-defined guidelines and standards for future streetlight infrastructure. The guidelines will be implemented on an evolutionary fashion along with future road construction projects.

Looking to the future, the Streetlighting asset management contract has been announced, and on track for finalization with a contractor in March. Design work completed in 2004 and ready for 2005 advertisement include Georgia Avenue from U Street to Gresham Place, and 4<sup>th</sup> Street, NW from W Street to Hobart Street. These are just a few of the projects ready for advertisement..

## **Trees**

Last week, DDOT published the final regulation implementing the Urban Forest Preservation Act of 2002 in the DC Register. I would like to thank Councilmember Schwartz for her dedication to and hard work on passage of the tree bill. The Act establishes an urban forest preservation program, requires permits for Special Tree removals or replacements, and establishes a Tree Fund to be used to plant trees and defray costs associated with the implementation of this act. The program will provide numerous environmental and aesthetic benefits to the city.

DDOT has committed to increasing the tree canopy in the City. In this vein, DDOT planted over 4,300 trees in 2004. Additionally, DDOT has established a goal of having 150,000 trees in the city by the year 2010. Currently, that number stands at 114,000.

DDOT has initiated a task force that will establish city-wide policy for the pruning, removal and planting of city trees. This task force was created in response to challenges DDOT faced with utility work and

its connectedness with trees. Members of the task force include representatives from utilities and ANCs, as well as neighborhood residents and private organizations that have come together to reach consensus on tree related issues.

### **Safety**

Safety is a priority for DDOT. I am proud to announce to the Committee that motor vehicle deaths decreased thirty four percent (34%) from 68 fatalities in 2003 to 45 fatalities in 2004. Additionally, seat belt usage is up again in the District, going from 85% in 2003 to 87% last year, one of the highest usage rates in the country. The *Click it or Ticket* program, run jointly by DDOT and MPD, has been and continues to be a success story.

### **Pedestrians**

I am excited about the Pedestrian Safety Specialist position that was recently advertised. We are currently interviewing candidates for this position. This specialist will be charged with integrating pedestrian safety into our transportation system through public outreach and education, developing comprehensive safety objectives and reviewing design plans for construction projects.

Last year, DDOT installed countdown pedestrian signals at 358 intersections throughout the city. This year we will expand the program to all pedestrian crossings.

### **Traffic Signals**

DDOT has successfully implemented state-of-the-art LED conversions at 777 signalized intersections city-wide. These bulbs consume 80% less energy than their incandescent counterparts and last for 5-7 years compared to one year for the old bulbs, thereby dramatically reducing maintenance costs.

## **Other Major Accomplishments**

Along with delivering basic operations and maintenance and increasing safety for the District's residents, DDOT is also committed to innovations in our approach to maintaining and improving our transportation system. I am pleased to report some of DDOT's major accomplishments in this area.

### **Alternative Transportation**

DDOT's Office of Mass Transit has had a number of recent accomplishments including the opening of the New York Avenue Metro Station, the system's first infill station. The station will serve a new technology and office center growing at the Florida/New York Avenues intersection, as well as Gallaudet University. The station also has connections to the Metropolitan Branch Trail, scheduled to open in the spring of 2005.

Another accomplishment is the November 2004 groundbreaking for the Anacostia Light Rail Demonstration project. This passenger rail project will serve the Anacostia area in Southeast Washington, DC. Service will extend along the east side of the Anacostia River between Bolling Air Force Base and Pennsylvania Avenue with stops at PA Avenue, Fairlawn, Old Anacostia, Anacostia Metrorail station, Barry Farm and Bolling Air Force Base.

The Downtown Circulator, which will provide fast, frequent and convenient shuttle bus service between Union Station and Georgetown, and from the Southwest Waterfront to the new Convention Center is set to begin early this summer.

The District of Columbia Bicycle Master Plan was completed and adopted by the Bicycle Advisory Committee. DDOT is now implementing bicycle trail and lane recommendations, as well as other bicycle facilities. DDOT has installed 15 miles of bicycle lanes in the past 3 years, including 5 miles in fiscal year 2004. More than 100 new bicycle route signs along 10 miles of roadway were added to neighborhood streets.



## **Neighborhood Streetscape Improvements**

Following on our effort to be more customer-focused, DDOT continued major investments in neighborhoods across the city, completing two major streetscape improvements (Barracks Row and M Street from Key Bridge to PA Ave.) in 2004. These streetscape projects represent neighborhood reinvestment that improve retail opportunities, provide jobs, reduce crime and in general improve the quality of life for residents. Numerous long-term, close cooperative public-private relationships developed through the process.

## **Traffic Management**

Perhaps the most apparent addition to DDOT operations is the traffic control officers that facilitate traffic flow and relieve downtown congestion at key intersections. This has been a successful joint effort by DDOT, DPW and MPD since it was initiated last fall.

As I mentioned earlier, DDOT is committed to maintaining a customer focus. A number of recent studies highlight this effort. The Mayor's Downtown Congestion Task Force, Mayor's Parking Task Force, the Tour Bus and Motor Carrier Studies all address traffic management issues in order to improve the quality of our systems, as well as the quality of life for our residents. These studies brought together numerous stakeholders from neighborhoods, ANCs, business groups and government agencies and of course we appreciate your participation in these efforts. Now that DDOT has completed these studies, the recommendations will be implemented in FY 2005 and beyond.

The Parking Task Force developed recommendations regarding city-wide parking with an emphasis on residential needs. The task force was comprised of approximately 40 representatives from city agencies as well as the general public. Recommendations were incorporated into the Downtown Congestion Task Force final report and are being advanced through Howard University (pilot) project. The Mayor is leading by example in his quest to improve parking challenges through a request to the D.C. Office of Property Management to see how the government can limit (or eliminate) any subsidy of employee parking in the downtown area.

The Downtown Congestion Task Force developed recommendations that will improve overall safety and efficiency of the movement of the traveling public in the downtown. This task force developed recommendations regarding Parking (in –line with the Parking Task force recommendations), traffic control, and motor carrier and transit services in the downtown area.

A number of the recommendations from these important traffic management studies require a commitment from Council, and my staff and I look forward to working with each Councilmember to maximize the progress that can be made to improve our transportation system.

### **Anacostia Waterfront Initiative**

The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) achieved milestone accomplishments. The completion of multiple studies, including the South Capitol Street Gateway Corridor and Anacostia Access Studies (10/2004), the Maine Avenue Traffic Study and the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail environmental assessment, moves DC one step closer to our goal. Each of these projects is a key component to the AWI. Work will now commence on the implementation of the recommendations.

An important connection to the Riverwalk Trail is the Watts Branch Trail. This summer we will begin construction of improvements to the trail including a new bridge, an improved alignment, attractive landscaping, and better connections to the neighborhood. The new trail will give people in Deanwood and the rest of northeastern Ward 7 a link to the Anacostia River and the regional trail network.

I would like to point out the implementation of a low impact development – the installation of a Bio Cell for storm water management at the Benning Road Bridge (completed 8/04). This project is significant because it is the first use of LID by the District government and was a joint project between DDOT, DOH, and DPR. It is currently being used as a model for similar work that is getting started throughout the city.

## **Environment**

In December, I signed the DDOT Environmental Policy Statement, committing the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) to a culture of environmental excellence that not only surpasses compliance with legal requirements but also achieves a positive DDOT environmental legacy. A 19-member DDOT Environmental Team is charged with implementing the policy through all DDOT personnel and divisions, DDOT's contractors and subcontractors, District and federal agencies that interact with DDOT and DDOT's relations with the public. This program is another example of an innovative partnership with AASHTO. The conversion of traffic signals to LED bulbs and the implementation of low impact development systems are just two examples of this culture already taking hold in the Department.

## **Snow Program**

DDOT has continued its recent success with our Snow program. In fact, GPS devices are now on all of our snow deployment vehicles. This enables us to better manage our fleet and produce better, faster results in snow emergencies. In an effort to better publicize our snow procedures, an updated snow zone map was posted on our website.

## **Kling Road**

DDOT continues to make very good progress toward the reconstruction of Kling Road. DDOT has completed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the Stormwater Management Plan is a component of this document. The Department provided the DEIS to FHWA and NPS for review which should be completed this month. Public review and comment of the DEIS will begin this spring and be completed this summer.

## **Awards**

DDOT has been doing better, but you don't simply have to take my word for it. In the past year, DDOT has received a number of awards. As a team, DDOT received a national award from the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for partnering with them on a nationally recognized joint performance plan. DDOT was recognized for our work on the 55<sup>th</sup> Presidential Inauguration as well as our coordination for the funeral of President Ronald Reagan. Based on our exemplary work with special events such as these, we

have been invited to speak at national forums and have written papers on special events operations. Additionally, I was nominated by my peers to the Northeast Association of State Transportation Officials (NASTO) as Vice-President, which will lead to Presidency this year and given me a position on the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) executive committee. These positions enable me to showcase DDOT accomplishments on a national scale and highlight the recognition that our Capital City deserves.

I would like to make note of DDOT's success in the area of Local, Small, and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (LSDBE) participation in our program. During fiscal year 2004, DDOT was in full compliance with LSDBE. In fact, the reports submitted to the Office of Local Business Development indicate that we achieved 116% of our goal for fiscal year 2004. Additionally, Mr. Ronnie Edwards, DDOT's LSDBE compliance manager was the recipient of the USDOT/FHWA first Minority Business Enterprise Advocate Award. This award is presented for dedication and commitment beyond professional responsibilities to advance minority and women business enterprises.

## **Conclusion**

This testimony is only a summary of our activities both current and those undertaken last year. As you can see, DDOT continues to make substantial progress in rebuilding the capacity to maintain and enhance the District's transportation systems.

I know I speak for all DDOT employees in expressing how proud we are of our many accomplishments over the last year and the confidence and dedication to face the challenges of this year. With the support of Mayor Williams and your assistance, Chairperson Schwartz, I know that DDOT can maintain this momentum.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I am pleased to answer any questions.